

# **Problems and Advantages associated with The Implementation of Cooperative Agreements in Emergency Fire Organizations**

## **Strategic Management of Change**

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## ABSTRACT

The fire service today is under tremendous pressure to “do more with less” and as a direct result of this pressure many fire departments are considering consolidation as an alternative to “downsizing” or cutting back on many essential services and community non-emergency programs.

This purpose of this research paper is to determine if there are alternative methods or programs that might be implemented within two small consolidated departments that can reduce costs duplication of non-emergency services.

Using the evaluative research methodology, the following questions were explored and answered:

1. Can local agencies cooperate to provide services and eliminate duplication of related emergency services.
2. What contracts or agreements would this cooperation require
3. What are the direct benefits to each participating department and would the impact be the same for all involved
4. What are some of the unanticipated challenges that might be realized or encountered in these cooperative ventures

A review of the political history of Central Yavapai Fire District and the City of Prescott Fire Department revealed that both departments were dedicated to the finalization of a five years consolidation effort. A variety of problems related to implementing an organizational and cultural change required the review and application of the management of change model.

Additionally, the applied procedures included the administration of a survey questionnaire sent to forty (40) EFOP students and the subsequent review and analysis of that information and specific data.

The results revealed that more than half of organization surveyed were currently involved in some type of cooperative agreement to share in community non-emergency programs, or they were in the process of beginning one.

The recommendations were to establish formal, comprehensive, public/ community minded cooperative programs and complete the consolidation effort that will be the basis for a joint approach to doing more with less.

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## INTRODUCTION

If there is one thing that jumps right out at you today when you read the local newspaper, watch the evening news or listen to your favorite radio talk-show it's that companies everywhere are merging, organizations are consolidating and agencies are sharing personnel, resources and information. Why is that? Well.... the list of reasons and justifications can go on for hours but, the truth is, it simply makes more sense for people to cooperate, consolidate and communicate in accomplishing their goals than trying to do it alone. Still, it hasn't always been that way. Unfortunately the fire service has been one of the last institutions to jump on the "ole bandwagon".

Historically the fire service has taken great pride in the fact that it has always had a traditional and quasi-military approach in its management style, supervisory practices and a myopic view of leadership. Much has been written in the last few years about how the role of the fire service has expanded and how the "all new" fire service will meet those challenges. Less has been written about how the modern fire service specifically should deal with the changes that impact personnel as departments begin to consolidate and share each other's strengths, weaknesses and their own distinctive and sometimes conflicting cultures.

The consolidation of two small central Arizona fire departments and the expectations of what that might bring to each organization, the community and the individual members is presented in this research paper.

The problems associated with integrating so many parts, functions and services of two distinctively different and unique fire departments posed multiple technical, politically and operational challenges. The process is still being refined and the consolidation effort is expected to require approximately two more years to reach its goal of complete consolidation. It has been a journey that has, by design, actively involved every level of each organization from firefighters to chief officers. Surveys have been conducted, committees have been established, informal focus groups were formed and studies were reviewed and guess what? The conclusions have been consistent in their findings, *change* is difficult, *change* can cause fear, however, *change* that is managed correctly and explained in understandable terms can be an unusually powerful phenomenon that can drive organizations and their people to focus positively on the future. The full impact of this consolidation effort may not be appreciated for many years to come, however; studying the signs and symptoms of change while at the same time striving to understand it's dynamic nature has produced interesting data, identified weaknesses and reinforced hopes for the future.

One of the more important questions discussed repeatedly during the countless committee meetings and panel discussions was this one, “*What are the specific areas of common service that could be shared once the departments are consolidated?*” While on the surface this might seem to be an easy question to answer, it was not. Utilizing the evaluative research approach, the *purpose of this paper* will be to determine if alternative methods, projects or programs can be implemented to avoid duplication of services between emergency agencies who serve the same geographic, political and demographic areas. Additionally, emphasis was attached to those areas that require collaboration and cooperation with agencies that included, but were not limited to, local law-enforcement agencies, regional hospitals and clinics, ambulance services, health departments and community organizations.

Moreover, this research paper will attempt, through the *evaluative method*, to answer the following *research questions* as completely and accurately as possible.

### Research Questions

- 1). Can local agencies efficiently and effectively cooperate to provide services that eliminate costly duplication of related services.
- 2). What contractual or legal agreements would these cooperative agreements require to effectively and efficiently accomplish their goals.
- 3). What might be the direct benefits from these cooperative agreements and would they benefit and impact each agencies in the same way.

4). What are some of the unanticipated challenges that may be realized as a result of new attitudes and philosophies.

Each of the four stated research questions shall be addressed and reviewed separately in the Results section of this research paper. The management methods presented in the Strategic Management of Change program will serve as guidelines for research report and evaluative study.

## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The Central Yavapai Fire District is a combination fire department in the north central region of Arizona that currently employs approximately eighty-five full-time paid employees and serves a population of 45,000 people from four manned fire stations. CYFD was formally established as a special district in 1965 in the third largest county in Arizona, Yavapai County. From 1965 until 1985 the Fire District experienced a relatively slow growth that provided the organization an opportunity to easily adjust and respond to most of the challenges facing a young department. In August of 1985 the addition of fifteen new full-time firefighters essentially doubled the departments size and upgraded the EMS service it provided to the paramedic level (ACLS). In providing paramedic level emergency medical services to the local residents of a predominately rural area, Central Yavapai Fire District suddenly became the model for many emergency providers within the immediate service area. From 1986 until the present, Central Yavapai Fire District has undergone a variety of changes that have included reorganization, self-evaluation and

now,.... consolidation. The most significant of those changes began slowly approximately five years ago. That specifically was the decision by the Fire District's Board of Directors and the city council members of the largest community in the area, Prescott, Arizona, to study the feasibility of combining the Central Yavapai Fire District and the local fire department of the City of Prescott into one emergency response organization. Subsequent efforts to consolidate have been generally well received and successful in producing three shared programs through mutual agreements and formal contracts.

First, both departments utilize one Training Director who is responsible for the planning, organizing and delivery of all training to both departments. This is for the most part accomplished by providing regularly scheduled training at a centrally location at a facility that both departments share. Second, a Regional Communication Center has been established to provide emergency fire dispatching services to not only Central Yavapai Fire District and the City of Prescott, but also has established contractual agreements with three other smaller fire departments in the area. Third, both organizations benefit from an joint agreement that provides a Joint Fleet Maintenance agreement utilizing three certified fire mechanics at a large, well equipped, facility centrally located within the response areas of both departments. Moreover, both departments respond into each other areas of jurisdiction on a "closest unit responds" agreement that has drastically reduced the response times of both departments. Other examples of shared use within both departments will be discussed in more details in subsequent sections of this paper.

Although the establishment of strong cooperative efforts between the Central Yavapai Fire District and the City of Prescott had already demonstrated substantial financial savings, it was inevitable that the next logical step in the progression would be to ask, "So if it works so well between fire departments, why shouldn't it work among those other agencies and organization who essentially offer non-emergency public services"? And the answer was....., "Well, up until now. nobody has tried it before!". The fact of the matter was that little or no effort had ever been made to directly work together in providing related types of non-emergency services in the community. This included most agencies such as the police department, the local health care clinics, the regional hospital, the county health department, private ambulance providers and local business community. In their writing for *The Employee Handbook for Organizational Change*, Pritchett and Pound note that the reason that, "people defend the old way of doing things is to maintain personal stability or *feel* more in control. They battle against change out of fear of the future, not because of love for the past" (1991, p. 38) Accordingly, it may not have been so much because agencies "loved" what they had done in the past as much as their fear of the change that the future might bring.

Applying the concepts discussed in the Strategic Management of Change class taught through the Executive Fire Officer Program involved identifying the primary objectives and goals and relating them to the obstacles standing in the way of achieving them. For the purpose of this research paper two specific small projects were identified as

target programs that might be studied, implemented and reviewed within the six month limitations of the Executive Fire Officer Research Project.

The first project involved a cooperative venture with the Yavapai County Health Department that involved the utilization of paramedic personnel from CYFD to assist the county in the administration of immunizations and other health care screening tests (see appendix A). This first project was selected as opportunity to implement a new program that could demonstrates results in a relatively short period of time while allowing time to evaluate the results and draw some preliminary conclusions. As the procedure section of this paper will reveal, the project met with administrative delays and lack of enthusiastic support from the beginning.

The second project involved the distribution of a comprehensive survey that was mailed directly to forty participants of the Executive Fire Officer Program seeking their input on several issues related to cooperative programs within their organizations. The purpose of this survey questionnaire was specifically to help identify the types of cooperative programs being utilized throughout a cross section of the US fire service and what it took to implement and maintain those programs . (see appendix B).

It was the intent of this research to identify factors that may either promote new programs or stand directly in opposition of their implementation and maintenance, Just as importantly, this research paper was intended to gather data related to what is now

working in other organizations and how might that information benefit Central Yavapai Fire District and other agencies in Prescott Arizona.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In researching the issues associated with this project it became necessary to query a broad variety of sources in and outside of the fire service. While some material directly addressed the issues of consolidation, most provided limited information about changes that involve sharing resources, data, personnel and equipment and facilities. Much of the research material reviewed concentrated on political issues and all but ignored the concerns related to personnel “people” issues and questions. This section will review the literature related to historical perspective of change and consolidation, what are the benefits of consolidation change and who may benefits the most.

In *The Psychology of Change*, Clackman County Oregon fire chief Randy R. Bruegman writes that firefighters, organizations, fire chiefs and people in general feel most vulnerable when “we feel we’ve lost a degree of control over our own lives” (Bruegman, 1997, p. 56). For that reason alone the basic process of reassessment, reorganizing and redistribution of authority, resources and manpower can be very overwhelming. Giving up control, in any environment is not as easy as the familiar task of handing-off an emergency in the Incident Command System (ICS) sense of problem solving and incident mitigation. In his book *“Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change”* William Bridges offers this observation: “Transition starts with an ending, with letting go of an old reality” (1991, p. 103) Clearly the process of change and implementation of any transition will be easier, if

not less painful, in those departments or organizations that are relatively young, progressive and not mired in old traditional cultural baggage that makes it difficult to “let go of an old reality”. In the case of Central Yavapai Fire District the Prescott Fire Department we were dealing with departments from both ends of the spectrum. Prescott Fire Department was organized over one hundred years ago in 1895 (old for a fire department in the southwest) while Central Yavapai Fire District was formed in 1966 as a special district to provide fire protection in the growing rural population surrounding the city of Prescott, Arizona. The policy makers in both organizations were a mixed cross section of residents of the area who served on either the Prescott City Council or Central Yavapai Fire District Fire Board of Directors. In describing the real change that public policy maker can effect, James MacGregor Burns says simply that, “policy makers are effective to the extent that they can make their policies and the institutions to which they have access responsive to public needs and goals” (Burns, 1993, p. 406). Clearly this applies to public tax-funded organizations such as most fire departments and the extent that they are successful is dependent on their understanding of what the public needs. In making controversial or delicate political decisions, policy makers may respond with techniques of delay in an effort to defuse issues or wait in the hope that public sentiment may lose its intensity.

Decision-making can also be avoided by instituting fact-finding groups or advisory panels to research issues with the instruction to report back at a late specified date. The hard questions, issues and complex political legal quagmire that often surrounds

consolidation in the fire service may grind to stall when those who are accountable feel they must battle against change out of fear of the future not because of their love of the past. Burns goes on to say “Planning leaders, more than other leaders, must respond not simply to popular attitudes and beliefs but to the fundamental wants, needs, aspirations and expectations and goals of their existing and potential followers” (Burns, 1993, p. 420) It doesn’t take rocket technology to interpret what is means, if you are going to be effective and efficient in giving the public what they want and need, you have to know what those things are. Moreover, planners (chiefs) and decision makers (company officers) must meets the expectations of their current and future followers (subordinates) In the article *Out of the Station, Into the Community*, fire chief Robin F. Paulsgrove writes, “Many of our urban fire departments are staffed with dedicated people who, for economy or by choice, have elected to live outside their service area. While their professional commitment is never in doubt, their “buy-in” with the community’s values and “ownership” of a neighborhood’s particular problems might be suspect” (Paulsgrove, 1996, p. 35).

As it becomes increasingly more expensive for workers to live where they work, feelings of separation and disassociation can challenge an individual’s commitment to segment of society and he serves. “The very best of our leaders have challenged us, saying that our future isn’t separate from that of the community. It might seems that there’s one future for businesses which are, perhaps, enjoying another boom in your community, another belt-tightening future for a government under attack by cynical public, and still another for a generation of children at risk” (Paulsgrove, 1996, p. 35) Today firefighters at

every level must be politically aware of the economic and social issues that affect their community or area of service. "In fact, our communities have but one future. As leaders, we must commit ourselves to a public safety and public service role in defining that future. We must get out of the station and into the community" (Paulsgrove, 1991, p. 36) One of the goals of this paper was to review the impact community outreach and cooperative public service programs would have on organizations as they consolidate resources equipment and personnel. It has always been the policy of both department to cultivate positive community relations. John A. Granito writes in his article, *Expanding Fire Department Public Service Programs*, for the NFPA Journal, "In an effort to improve the quality of life in their communities, many fire departments, even those with limited funds and resources, are increasing their non-emergency service program" (Granito, 1995, p.74) Some stations may be used for such things as gun turn-in locations, polling places, bicycle licensing and safe-places for children. Less popular are those programs that require personnel to perform duties that are totally unrelated to their work such as parking meter repair, park maintenance. Programs such as these prove that if fire department can't initiate their own community programs, someone else will.

It has only been in the last ten to fifteen years that fire service has recognized the need to train staff officers as personnel managers as well as leaders. Additionally, most departments today also acknowledge that, "Leadership styles that worked many years ago do not work today. It must be recognized that rank does not provide anyone with a monopoly on good ideas, in fact, the lowest-ranking employee may sometimes have great

ideas that are worth putting into practice” (Mitchell, 1990, p.87). It should be no surprise that today’s fire service must be managed, administered and evaluated just as any other business if it hopes to survive as a effective, efficient and productive emergency services authority.

## PROCEDURES

This research paper was conduct in the evaluative method and specifically directed at answering the research questions outlined in the Introduction of the paper. Moreover, the specific approach utilized followed the change management model as described in Strategic Management of Change course taught as the National Fire Academy. To determine if alternative methods can be implemented that will avoid the duplication of effort between emergency agencies, two things had to take place. The first was a comprehensive review of the efforts that had already being utilized and the second was a survey of other emergency fire departments to determine what they were currently doing that would make the implementation of this program easier.

The first part of the research involved applying the change management model to the research problem to determine where to start, what we had and how and when to implement changes as required. This demanded the application of the four phases of the management model as described below.

**PHASE I ANALYSIS**: This first phase involved analyzing the existing situation and

assessing the specific changes that needed to be made. This assessment had been made for the most part by all the reviews, assessments and analysis that had been carried out during the preparation for consolidation. A review of existing data from all the reports generated in the past four years satisfied the requirements under Task 1.1 of the Change Management Model. The study of this analysis data determined that a changes could be implemented if the right procedures were utilized and introduced with the correct approach. Determining organizational change requirements were the focus of Task 1.4. This included determining the perspective of change, the magnitude of change and the objects of change. The transformational perspective was the most applicable in the changes being proposed in this situation. Specifically, this change would require new beliefs and a radial reconceptualization of the organizations mission and methods of dealing with cooperative programs and projects. The magnitude of this change would be measured in the pace, scope and depth of the individual programs that would be proposed. The pace would be a slow planned progressive process that everyone involved in the change could be comfortable with. The scope of the changes would be small enough to allow all those involved to concentrate on each project separately while the depth of the change would have an relatively small impact on all the organization involved.

**PHASE II PLANNING:** The goal of planning is to translate the change requirements discovered during the analysis phase and transform them into a detailed plan to accomplish the desired change. In review of Task 2.1 the forces for and against have

been defined as primarily two types. Generally the personnel employed by the Fire District welcome the opportunity to utilize and practice their medical skills while at the same time providing a positive public relations opportunity for the fire department. In some instances the increased exposure of personnel to communicable diseases raised liability concerns, but the regular utilization of universal precautions and the mandatory compliance with establish infection control protocols quelled those fears. Additionally, it appears that the County Health Department administrative staff may have had some reservations about the possibility that some of the jobs might be put a risk or lost if they were to participate in a joint venture. This fear was addressed in face-to-face meetings and phone conversations with the administrator of the “Wellness on Wheels” program. It was easy to see that there might be a concern over the fact that if the fire department begins to provide a service to the public that is at no cost, the risk of having cut backs or even elimination’s of positions could be realized. While it was never the intention of the fire district to “take over” another organizations “turf” or try to eliminate the services provided by another governmental agency, it is easy to appreciate some of the feelings of concerns and the resulting sense of paranoia. Overcoming this resistance is still the most significant area of concern that faces this program.

**PHASE III IMPLEMENTATION:** It is in this phase that the planning and the analysis of the proposed ideas or programs are executed with a detailed and careful strategy. True to change model’s prediction, this is the phase where unanticipated problems and

unexpected delays materialize. Unfortunately the detailed proposals that were made to immediately implement the joint health department and fire department program were suddenly delayed until “next year”. While there was no other explanation other than a letter to the fire district, a phone call revealed little additional justification for the delay in the implementation of the joint program (see letter in Appendix B)

The issues that surround the “license or certification” of fire district personnel who were to be involved in the administration of immunizations was simply a matter of providing copies of certification cards from the Arizona Department of Health Services. The provision of medical “standing orders” had been arranged in advance of the offer to assist in providing health care services.

**PHASE 1V EVALUATION:** Once a change management program is implemented, it must be monitored, evaluated and systematically assessed to ensure that it is working as anticipated by the goals and objective of the detailed plan. Obviously the proposal can not be evaluated at this time due to the delay in implementation. A review of the three previous phases as undertaken to understand what might have been done differently to avoid the sudden decision to delay. While the phases might have been implemented more slowly and with specific detail addressing the concerns of the Health Department about “turf” questions, at this time all that can be done is wait and attempt to implement this joint program as soon as possible.

The second part of this research paper involved the distribution of a survey to other fire department throughout the United States with the specific goals of gathering information related to how they are working with other emergency agencies and if they are sharing personnel, equipment, resources and facilities ( see Appendix D). This survey was sent to forty members of different fire departments from a list of students who are currently participating in the Executive Fire Officer Program. The reason that this particular group was utilized was that they are a diversified cross-section of chief officers who are familiar with the information contained in the survey and have an understanding of the importance of the applied research process. Additionally, this group of fire or emergency agency personnel have a shared understanding of the data that is requested as it pertains to their specific department. Out of forty surveys that were mailed with a self-addressed stamped return envelope, thirty-nine were returned. That is absolutely an amazing percentage of returned surveys and again adds support for utilizing the contacts established with other EFOP participants. In general the survey served to gather information that could be used to establish the frequency of incidents where organizations share resources and make efforts to avoid duplication of efforts especially where agencies are tax-based. The surveys results did not reveal any dramatic trends in the fire service, or expose any new and interesting shifts in the way we do business, but it did serve to re-enforce what this research paper had hoped to accomplish with it's joint program proposal. Certainly the over-all worth and validity of this research survey would be greatly enhances if the same survey questionnaire

could be distributed again in two or three years with the same agencies. While the survey data is presented here in a non-scientific format the conclusions are generally easy to understand and the value of the information is dependent on the readers interest in the results as calculated. While most of the questions are very straight forward, some respondents provided extra notes and comments on the second page.

It is important to the understanding of this research that the data presented in the results section of this paper was a sampling of forty very different and individually unique emergency organizations. Additionally, the conclusions drawn from the data collection is expressed with some bias from the author of this paper. Again, this is not a scientific methodology only a questionnaire. The compilation of survey information and added comments is presented in the results section of this paper.

## **RESULTS**

The first opportunity to address the research questions will be the review of the information gleaned from the survey questionnaire described in the Procedures section of this research. The raw data is presented in a simple format that follows the survey forms from question number one through eleven. Specific conclusions from the data is presented and discussed in the Conclusion section of the paper. Answers that appear highlighted in red are the choices that were selected with the most frequency. Following each question is a short commentary on the results based on the statistical analysis and

the comments and notes included in with many of the individual research survey questionnaires.

## Results of Survey Questionnaire

### Appendix A

1. My Department is best described as being?

(27) a. Career paid full-time

(00) d. Other

(00) b. Volunteer

(12) c. Combination

The overwhelming majority of respondents said that they served in a career paid full-time organization. Approximately 31% said that they serve in a combination fire department. The majority of departments west of the Mississippi were career full-time.

2. My Department has approximately \_\_\_\_ members?

(03) a. 25 or less

(04) e. 400

(15) b. 100

(05) f. 750

(08) c. 150

(04) g. 1000

(00) d. 250

Thirty-eight percent of the respondent said that their department had at least 100 members. Of those respondents, eighty percent said that they had formal agreements with other organizations for a variety of services. Other survey data demonstrates that 100 is about the average size of U.S. full-time career fire departments.

## 3. My department serves a population of approximately?

(02 ) a. 10,000 or less

(11) d. 100,000

(15) b. 25,000

(05) e. 200,000

(06) c. 50,000

Again, thirty-eight percent of the respondents said that their department served a population the 25,000 which is approximately half of the population served by department that are the subject of this applied research project.

## 4. My department serves a predominately \_\_\_\_ population?

(22) a. urban

(01) d. agricultural

(06) b. rural

(01) e. senior retirement

(04) c. Industrial

(05) f. all of the above

Fifty-six percent of the respondent served area predominately classified as urban. This may account for the high percent of mutual-aid or inter-agency agreement that required a formal contract of agreement.

## 5. My department provides the following training or services (check all that apply)

(38) a. Fire

(36) h. Arson investigation

(29) b. Haz Mat

(37) i. Public Education

(34) c. EMS

(34) j. Business Inspections

(23) d. BLS

(22) k. Residential Inspections

(24) e. ALS

(28) l. Technical Rescue

(17) f. ACLS

(16) m. Crash Rescue

(19) g. Fire Prevention

(01) n. Other

Not surprisingly, thirty-eight out of thirty-nine of the respondents surveyed aid that their department provided fire suppression service. More importantly, as evident by the numbers under each category, most department provided at least four different other services typically not associated with fire suppression (i.e. business inspections, public education, Haz Mat. etc)

6. My department is considered a \_\_\_\_ emergency service?

(33) a. Municipal

(03) d. County

(02) b. Special District

(01) e. State

(00) c. Private

(00) f. Other

While thirty-three of the respondent identified themselves as a municipal organizations, the other six organizations were also tax-based services. While this generally would seem to lessen the concern over conflict of interest and “turf” issues related to shared services, this was not always the case.

7. My department personnel work a \_\_\_\_ shift?

(31) a. 24 hour shift

(01) d. On-call

(00) b. 12 hour shift

(06) e. Other

(01) c. 8 hour shift

Not surprisingly the majority of the departments surveyed reported that they delivered their service on a 24 hours a day 7 days a week basis. However, four departments reported that alternative shift hour schedules were being “looked at” to increase productivity and meet the demands of “extra” work, inspections and community programs within their organizations.

8. My department has developed working relationships with \_\_\_\_ agencies?

(23) a. County Health

(08) e. Nursing Homes

(35) b. Law Enforcement

(06) f. Urgent Care Facility

(18) c. Health Care Clinic

(02) g. Free Clinic

(22) d. Hospital

(11) h. Other

Again, not surprisingly, most if not all the respondent had a working relationship with the law enforcement agencies within their jurisdiction. Hospitals and County Health agencies were also well represented with survey comments included that showed a recent increase of interaction with private, for-profit free standing urgent care facilities (Doc-in-the-Box).

9. Do these working relationships include sharing the use of \_\_\_\_ ?

(14) a. Personnel

(25) f. Training

(18) b. Equipment

(18) g. Information

(23) c. Related Resources

(04) h. N/A

(18) d. Facilities

Sixty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they shared TRAINING with other organization. Equipment, facilities and information with also common area of sharing with respondents indicating that this happens approximately forty-six percent of the time. Thirty-six percent said that they also share PERSONNEL. This is the one area of shared resource use that could have the most significant economic impact for all agencies. This also would suggest that to some degree, the personnel involved would need to be cross-trained.

10. If answer to question number 9 is “yes”, do these relationships require formal agreements, contracts or Inter-governmental agreements?

(17) a. Yes

(15) b. No

(07) c. N/A

Forty-three percent of the respondents answered that they had some formalized agreement in place to legitimize the shared interaction and cross utilization of equipment, personnel and other related resources. Thirty-eight reported that they did not.

**Question # Eleven:** This survey question asked respondents to indicate which programs their organization was currently administering that they felt established better working relationships with other agencies. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate which programs they believed provided an opportunity for improved services, financial incentives and positive benefits from shared services. The following programs were the choices most respondents believed provided the most benefit and positive return for the effort by fire department personnel.

- a. Utilization of department medical personnel to provide their specialized skills in the community. (twenty eight (28) departments said this is essential)
- b. Making department personnel available for special events within the local community at no cost to the public. (twenty-three (23) departments agreed)
- c. Providing specialized training to other organizations, groups, agencies and clubs as a part of public education and awareness. (twenty-one (21) departments provide public education to the community in some form).

In answering the specific four research questions stated in the introduction of this paper the results were not surprising. Although the program proposed through the County Health Department has not been implemented as had been anticipated, there is enough information available to make a reasonable prediction of the outcome.

1. Local agencies can cooperate to provide services that eliminate duplication of those same services if:
  - a. Positive and regular communications between agencies limit the obstacles that can prevent both organizations from enjoying the benefits that professional cooperation can provide.
  - b. Survey results demonstrate that many other emergency organizations currently have implemented cooperative agreements and understand the benefits of pursuing those types of programs within their area of service.

2. The experience of this research revealed that while specific contractual agreements may not be absolutely required, some well-designed type of formal agreements should be developed so that the conditions of the program can be outlined and clearly understood. Additionally, trying to evaluate and review the success or failure of any effort will be easier when a formal agreement has been established. Still, many fire departments provided a variety of community programs without formal or legal agreements and seemly enjoy a high degree of success.
3. The direct or indirect benefits derived from cooperative agreements are directly related to following three considerations:
  - a. The degree of support that each program or project enjoys from the highest levels of administration. Project not enthusiastically endorsed by the staff have a short life and struggle in competing for funding.
  - b. The public perception that these agreements are being administered properly and that the provided funding is not mismanaged.
  - c. The perception among the sponsoring organizations that their efforts are providing a win-win situation for their department, the public, clubs, group etc.

It would be difficult to evaluate the specific impact of any particular program in general, however; it is can be concluded that in most instances the degree of impact would be different for every individual department and program. The direct benefits from most

cooperative programs that fire departments administer and participate in include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Positive Public Relations
  - b. Better utilization of personnel and public funding
  - c. Improved communications and relationships with agencies involved
  - d. Team-building and improved morale
4. Some of the unanticipated challenges commonly encountered or realized as a result of new attitudes and philosophies are:
- a. Turf protection (issues related to territorial or boundary paranoia)
  - b. Fear of Job Loss (generally by private sector agencies who worry that government is infringing into their area of business, expertise etc.
  - c. Lack of motivation or cooperation by fire personnel involved in new programs.
- (reason why it is important that the chief be supportive)

## DISCUSSION

Clearly the issues, politics and program implementation studied in this research project leave considerable latitude for discussion and opinion. Being on the inside looking out is not the best position or perspective to judge from. None-the-less, the researcher has had the experience of seeing the development of an alliance that is working today better than it ever has. At least if it's success is to be measured by the efficiency, productivity and the effectiveness of the both organizations, then I submit that it is working. As to the

question of cooperative efforts and programs with other governmental and private sector service providers, I am less encouraged. Certainly both department have established productive, effective and important joint efforts in services that benefit everyone involved. The result from the questionnaires did helped to support the notion that “everybody’s doing it” and evidently, “doing it” with positive feedback and good outcomes. The best conclusion at this time is to proceed carefully with the consolidation effort and implement any additional cooperative ventures with careful consideration.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

While a close and careful review of the information presented in this research paper can be interpreted in different ways, the following three recommendations are supported by the research data as it is related to this paper’s problem and purpose statements.

1. Aggressively proceed with the goal of complete consolidation of the Central Yavapai Fire District and the City of Prescott fire departments.
2. Pursue those cooperative efforts aimed at reducing duplication of non-emergency services with the careful consideration of the following:
  - a. Develop and adopt formal agreements that specify all the terms of the service and outline responsibilities.
  - b. Evaluate all programs/projects on a regular basis to determine if they are doing specifically what they were designed to do. If they are not, discontinue them.
3. Implement a public awareness campaign that promotes all the joint programs that

both department's are involved in. This campaign include participation from all levels of the organizations and should "punch" the following:

- a. Joint programs avoid or reduce duplication of efforts and may generate saving to all the tax-payers.
- b. Joint programs promote more effective and efficient utilization of fire department personnel, equipment and resources
- c. Joint programs encourage better and more positive community relations
- d. Joint programs encourage and allow organizations to, "do more with less!"

The purpose of this applied research project was to determine if alternative programs or methods can be implemented to avoid the duplication of non-emergency services by fire departments and other agencies serving the same geographic area.

The answer is Yes. Moreover, the information presented in this research paper supports not only that it is true in the area served by Central Yavapai Fire District and the City of Prescott fire department, but survey questionnaire results confirmed that the majority of other fire department managers surveyed agree.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Survey Questionnaire**

**EXECUTIVE FIRE OFFICER PROGRAM  
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Instructions:** Please check the box or boxes that best describe your department

- 1. My department is best described as being \_\_\_\_?**  
☐ Career paid-full-time ☐ Volunteers ☐ Combinations ☐ Other
- 2. My department has approximately \_\_\_\_ members?**  
☐ 25 or less ☐ 100 ☐ 150 ☐ 250 ☐ 400 ☐ 750 ☐ 1000 or more
- 3. My department serves a population of approximately \_\_\_\_?**  
☐ 10,000 or less ☐ 25,000 ☐ 50,00 ☐ 100,000 ☐ 200,000 or more
- 4. My department serves primarily a \_\_\_\_ area? (check all that apply)**  
☐ Urban ☐ Rural ☐ Industrial ☐ Agricultural ☐ Senior Retirement
- 5. My department provides the following services? (check all that apply)**  
☐ Fire Suppression ☐ Haz Mat Team ☐ EMS ☐ BLS ☐ ALS ☐ ACLS  
☐ Fire Prevention ☐ Arson investigation ☐ Public Education ☐ Business  
Inspection ☐ Residential Inspection ☐ Technical Rescue ☐ Crash Rescue
- 6. My department is considered a \_\_\_\_ emergency fire service**  
☐ Municipal ☐ Special District ☐ Private ☐ County ☐ State ☐ Federal
- 7. My department's personnel work a \_\_\_\_ shift? (assigned to operations)**  
☐ 24 hour ☐ 12 hour ☐ 8 hour ☐ on-call ☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. My department has developed working relationship with agencies such as...**  
☐ County/State Health Department ☐ Law Enforcement local/county/state  
☐ Health Care facilities ☐ Hospitals ☐ Nursing Homes ☐ Urgent Care Center  
☐ Free Clinics ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Do any of these working relationship/agreements include sharing the use of?**  
☐ Personnel ☐ Equipment ☐ Resources ☐ Facilities ☐ Training ☐ Info  
☐ N/A ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. If answer to question #9 is yes, do any of these working relationships require formal contracts or legal agreements?**  
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A If Yes explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Listed below are areas of shared services and resources that can provide many benefits to all agencies involved. Indicate with an [X] any specific areas that you believe can help establish either better working relationships, improved services or provide financial incentives. If your organization is currently involved in any one of these programs, or one similar to it, also circle the letter.

a. ☐ Utilization of fire department medical personnel (EMT's and Paramedics) to *assist* local Health Departments administer, flu shots, TB skin test, hepatitis vaccinations, blood pressure screening, blood glucose monitoring etc.

b. ☐ Enlisting the help of fire department CISD trained personnel in providing *counseling to victims* of large scale disasters and catastrophic or traumatic events. (i.e. flood, earthquake, wildland fire, trauma or injury and fatalities related to violent criminal activity or civil unrest).

c. ☐ Providing *specialty training* to law enforcement agencies, municipal departments, business groups, clubs, organizations, churches and educational institutions. (beyond the standard First-Aid, CPR and Fire Prevention)

d. ☐ Sponsorship of a Fire Academy program whose goal would be to *educate* pre-selected, key individuals within the community as to the mission, goals and the day-to-day operation of the local fire department.

e. ☐ Organizing and dispatching wildland "off-jurisdiction" Fire and EMS "strike teams" to *assist* and *support* State or Federal agencies during fire season. This response may be activated by contract or mutual aid agreement.

f. ☐ Making emergency personnel available for *special events* such as sporting events, rodeos, concerts, assemblies, marathons, families days, car shows or Toys-for-Tots programs. Underline any of these examples where some type of *service* or *assistance* is provided at no charge.

h. Please include any comments or remarks that you believe may be helpful in this study. I appreciate and welcome your ideas and respect your input:

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12. Thank you for your participation in this important survey. Your contribution will add depth to this study and provide "real world" data from the places where the "rubber meets the road". Please take the time to complete this two page survey and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope that is included. **Thank you again.**

## **Appendix B**

### **Letter of Response**

November 6, 1996

**Fellow EFOP student:**

I trust that you are working hard toward the completion of your Executive Fire Officer Program and that you've dedicated every effort at producing the best applied research paper ever to grace the shelves of the Learning Center. Well, as you may have already guessed, I'm trying to finish mine up and have determined that relevant outside data would lend depth, insight and credibility to my own paper.

Seriously though, the subject of my research paper focuses on the types of **resource sharing** that fire organizations are utilizing throughout the United States and why this practice has become a necessity for survival in some organizations. My initial research has revealed that learning to "*share*" personnel, resources and in some cases, apparatus and equipment is a "*change*" that has caused some organizations a significant amount of concern, resentment and fear. For that reason I am asking that you take five or ten minutes out of your busy day and provide me with some "home grown" input on "*what you're doing now*" and "*what you think*" about some ideas that other organizations have had. I have provided a self-addressed stamped envelope

for your questionnaire and encourage you to include additional comments or remarks that you believe may be helpful to this study. Oh, one other thing, please make every effort to return this questionnaire as soon as you can, I sure would appreciate it.

**Sincerely,**

**Don Vasquez, Deputy Chief  
Central Yavapai Fire District**